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Committee on the Rights of the Child

# Working methods for the participation of children in the days of general discussion of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*

* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-eighth session (14 May–1 June 2018).

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# I. Introduction and objectives

1. Every two years, the Committee on the Rights of the Child devotes one of its regular meeting days to a general discussion of a specific article or articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or on a related subject in order to enhance a deeper understanding of the content and implications of the Convention.[1] This is known as a day of general discussion. Representatives of States, United Nations human rights mechanisms, bodies and specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national human rights institutions, the business sector, as well as individual experts, children and other stakeholders take part and submit written contributions.

2. The right of the child to be heard and taken seriously is a fundamental principle of the Convention; children have the right to freely express their views on all matters and decisions that affect them, and to have those views taken into account at all levels of society.[2] It is not only a right in itself but should also be considered in the interpretation and implementation of all other rights. The Committee emphasizes that children have the right to participate in days of general discussion on an equal footing, and play an important role in enabling the Committee and related stakeholders to better understand issues related to the implementation of the Convention. Children are encouraged to freely and actively participate in days of general discussion, and to share their knowledge, skills, views, experiences and recommendations. To that end, States, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, NGOs, national human rights institutions, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders have a responsibility to encourage and support the participation of children.

3. The participation of children in days of general discussion enables the Committee, and all participating stakeholders, to have a stronger understanding of the situation of children's rights in their respective countries and contexts with regard to the specific themes under discussion, and to understand the perspective of children on issues directly affecting them. The Committee acknowledges the value of the contributions of children to days of general discussion, and emphasizes that due consideration of their views, recommendations and other forms of information from children must be an integral part of such discussions.

4. Children who participate in days of general discussion inform the Committee and others of the centrality of their views and have an opportunity to learn more about their human rights and how they are relevant to their daily lives. Such a mutual opportunity can empower the Committee and the children to know and claim the human rights of children, and to respect and uphold the rights of their peers. Children are able to learn of the work of the Committee in monitoring the implementation of those rights, in particular in their respective countries, as well as other opportunities to engage in activities for human rights. Child participation fosters peer-to-peer learning and allows children to interact with, and learn from, the knowledge and experiences of other children, as well as relevant stakeholders. It also strengthens their self-confidence, agency and ability to have their voices heard and their capacity to advocate for the rights of children. The voice of children resonates with the Committee providing a real as opposed to textual context to the rights.

5. These working methods aim to facilitate and promote the meaningful participation of all children, particularly those in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations, in days of general discussion. They draw on the practical and diverse experiences of previous days of general discussion, the experience of the Committee in reviewing children's submissions and meeting with children, the discussion in 2006 on the right of the child to be heard, and consultations with the children's advisory group of the day of general discussion in 2018 on protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders. While specific to the participation of children in days of general discussion of the Committee, these working methods contain principles and guidelines that can be used by Governments, United

[1] In accordance with rule 79 of its rules of procedure (CRC/C/4/Rev.3) and as decided during its sixty-first session.

[2] Child participation rights are set out in articles 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17 of the Convention.

Nations bodies and specialized agencies, NGOs, national human rights institutions, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders for the organization of other meetings at the regional and international levels. At the same time, the Committee also acknowledges the varying backgrounds, experiences and resources of related stakeholders in days of general discussion, and the need to apply these working methods in a flexible, collaborative and innovative approach.

## II. Basic requirements for child participation

6. To ensure the effective and meaningful participation and representation of children in days of general discussion, child participation must be understood as a collaborative process in which all stakeholders contribute, and not as a single event driven by one organization or actor. Children should be supported to engage in days of general discussion in a meaningful and safe way, with a view to supporting the full realization of their civil rights and freedoms in the community in which they live by ensuring that children, including those in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations, can express their views freely, form their own organizations, groups and initiatives and participate in peaceful assembly. The manner in which they participate must be inclusive and be based on the children's own perspective. They should be involved in all stages of the day of general discussion.

### A. General principles

7. All processes and activities to ensure child participation must fully respect the Committee's basic requirements for the implementation of the right of the child to be heard:[3]

(a) **Transparent and informative**. Children should know that the right to be heard and listened to is the right of every child. They should receive detailed and accessible information on the scope, purpose, methods, implications and potential impact of their participation in days of general discussion;

(b) **Voluntary**. Children should understand that expressing their views is their choice and not an obligation, and should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes. All views presented by the children must be those of the children themselves and not of children who are facilitators, adults, organizations or groups they work with;

(c) **Respectful**. Children's views must be treated with respect, both by other children and adults. Children of all ages should be supported to initiate their own ideas and take an active role in the planning, organization and follow-up of days of general discussion, as well as in their participation. They must never be subjected to reprisals or intimidation for the expression of their views;

(d) **Relevant**. Children should be able to understand the relevance and significance of the DGD themes to their daily lives, and how they can draw on their knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences to participate in the discussion through the various methods available or through alternative methods proposed by the children;

(e) **Child-friendly**. Information and procedures related to days of general discussion — including any guidelines, templates or other materials — must be adapted for children, and should take into account the differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities, as well as different abilities and levels of education;

(f) **Inclusive**. Child participation in days of general discussion must be inclusive and accessible and avoid any forms or patterns of discrimination;

[3] These requirements are set out in the Committee's general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, and the working methods for the participation of children in the reporting process of the Committee.

(g) **Supported by training**. Children should receive training on human rights, effective participation, communication skills (such as writing, filming, public speaking and advocacy), and how to respect each other's views. Facilitators should also be trained on the importance and benefits of children's participation, as well as how to effectively prepare and facilitate their participation;

(h) **Safe and sensitive to risk**. Children must be aware of their right to be protected from harm, and facilitators interacting with children have a responsibility to take every precaution to minimize any negative consequence of their participation and to protect them from any form of intimidation or reprisals, or fear of such;

(i) **Accountable**. All partner organizations and those supporting or facilitating child participation must be committed to ensuring follow-up and evaluation. Children should be informed on how their participation has influenced the discussion and any follow-up activities, and participate in evaluation processes.

## B. Role of supporting organizations, accompanying adults and child facilitators of children

8. All those supporting or facilitating the participation of children in days of general discussion, such as States, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, NGOs (including child-led organizations and children's groups), national human rights institutions, the business sector and other relevant bodies, as well as accompanying adults and child facilitators of children, are encouraged to:

(a) Provide children with detailed, age-appropriate and accessible information on the scope, purpose, methods, implications and potential impact of their participation in days of general discussion. This includes information on why it is beneficial and useful for them to participate in days of general discussion, and how the experience can inform or advance ongoing initiatives or projects at the national and/or local level. It also means ensuring that children understand that days of general discussion, including submissions and related events, are public;

(b) Prepare child-friendly versions of any guidelines, templates or other materials in relation to days of general discussion, and ensure that they are presented to children in a manner that is accessible and makes sense to them;

(c) Reassure children that participation is a choice and not an obligation, and that they have the possibility to withdraw their participation at any stage of the process;

(d) Obtain the written consent of children and their parents or guardians, as applicable, to participate;

(e) Respect every child's right to freedom of expression and of thought, and ensure that all views expressed by all children are respected. Facilitators should help children to forge their own opinions by providing them with various information coming from several sources and encourage them to seek information in different ways. Adults, including family or community members and religious or young political leaders, should be careful not to impose their views on children;

(f) Manage the expectations of participating children, reminding them that the aim of days of general discussion is to build knowledge and collect good practices on children's human rights, and not to intervene in individual cases. Children should have realistic expectations and be aware of the possible limitations of their participation;

(g) Foster and promote a peer-to-peer selection approach that allows children to select the peers that they believe would best represent their issues and agendas. There should be a clear set of selection criteria to ensure a transparent and inclusive process. At the same time, prior knowledge of the theme should not necessarily be a requirement for selection; in fact, organizations and individuals should use the day of general discussion as an opportunity to strengthen the capacities of children and others in human rights and the chosen theme, as well as their communication and/or advocacy skills;

(h) Ensure that children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations are encouraged and enabled to participate on an equal basis with other children. This includes special measures to involve girls and boys, young children, children affected by poverty, children in street situations, children in institutions, children with disabilities, migrant, refugee and displaced children, children in conflict with the law, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children, children belonging to minority or indigenous groups, unaccompanied and separated children, and children who are parents, among others, as relevant;

(i) Provide training, including through peer-to-peer learning, for children to build their skills and confidence to meaningfully participate. This includes capacity-building in human rights and awareness of their rights, the chosen theme, effective participation, preparation of submissions and inputs according to the relevant guidelines, communication skills (such as writing, filming, public speaking and advocacy), and how to respect each other's views;

(j) Empower children to take part in all processes related to days of general discussion, such as providing them with opportunities to highlight issues and concerns that are particularly relevant, interesting and important for them. For example, if a submission by children is selected for an activity during the discussion, the authors of the submission should be able to play an active role in the organization of that activity;

(k) Ensure that facilitators are adequately trained to understand the importance and benefits of children's participation, and acquire the appropriate skills and attitudes to effectively prepare children and facilitate their participation. Training should aim at developing their capacities to listen to children's views, engage them effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities, ensure their safety throughout the process of participation and develop child-friendly materials;

(l) Inform children of their right to be protected from harm and consider the views of children when preventing, assessing and responding to risks. Children should also know what to do and where to report or raise their concerns if they feel unsafe;

(m) Put in place clear and comprehensive child protection policies and frameworks for children's involvement in international events that recognize the particular risks faced by some groups of children and the additional barriers they face in obtaining help. Such policies should outline how the States, organizations and other relevant bodies are committed to preventing, and include protocols for responding appropriately to, any negative consequences of child participation, such as reprisals or intimidation; clear responsibilities of staff in implementing the policies, including related support and training to build their capacities in this area; appropriate child safeguarding procedures; and accompanying monitoring frameworks;

(n) Provide translation for children who do not speak the working languages of the Committee (English, French and Spanish), and ensure that relevant materials are available in local languages.

9. In addition, accompanying adults and child facilitators of children who attend the days of general discussion in person are encouraged to:

(a) Uphold their primary responsibility for the safety and welfare of the children in their care at all times, which begins from the time the children leave their parents or guardians to travel and ends when they safely return to their parents or guardians. They should ensure, for example, that participating children have access to at least one adult who acts as a child protection focal point and provides confidential support, as needed, throughout the participation process, and that children understand that they can approach this person if they ever feel unsafe;

(b) Inform children that days of general discussion are public, filmed, potentially webcast and recorded for online posting and other uses, and that their participation is conditional on their consent (and that of their parents or guardians, as applicable) to be filmed individually. Children should also be briefed on interacting with the media as well as on its implications.

10. Following the day of general discussion, all supporting organizations, accompanying adults and child facilitators of children are encouraged to:

(a) Provide feedback to children on how their views have informed the discussion and the identification of follow-up activities, and provide them with opportunities to express their views on the outcome of their participation;

(b) Support children to organize and take part in follow-up initiatives to days of general discussion. For example, participating organizations can make a public pledge or commitment to support children with respect to the chosen theme, and offer grants or scholarships for children to organize follow-up projects that are designed and implemented primarily by children themselves;

(c) Evaluate the processes for ensuring child participation during days of general discussion, including through self-evaluation and feedback from child participants on the relevance, utility and impact of the processes and related activities. Organizations should also encourage children to identify and document lessons learned for ensuring the participation of children in future days of general discussion.

## C. Role of partner organizations

11. During the planning process, the Committee launches a call for proposals for themes, and selects one proposal based on the relevance of the theme, as well as the capacity of the submitting organization to plan and organize the day of general discussion. The author of the proposal that is selected by the Committee becomes the partner organization(s) of that day of general discussion. Among other criteria, partner organizations are selected based on their expertise and experience in the topic, as well as their demonstrated capacity, commitment and human and financial resources to mobilize and ensure the meaningful participation of children in days of general discussion. Partner organizations should also have the capacity to bring the outcome of the discussion back to the communities to which the children belong, and to facilitate the meaningful remote participation of children prior to, during and following the days of general discussion.

12. Once selected, partner organizations are encouraged to establish an advisory group of stakeholders with clearly identified roles, responsibilities, financial contributions and activities for ensuring the participation of children. This advisory group should also formulate a strategy for applying these working methods to the day of general discussion. The Committee recommends involving children in the planning process as early as possible, and acknowledges that this can be achieved through a variety of different approaches, depending on the capacities, resources and networks of the partner organizations, as well as the specificities of the chosen theme. One approach could involve the organization of children's workshops at the local level, drawing on existing networks of implementing organisations around the world whose projects involve children. These organizations could organize a series of workshops in their respective local contexts with groups of children already known within the context of their own programmes. In these workshops, each group could select one child or more to represent it at the day of general discussion, and prepare presentations and other materials for it. Such a process should start as early as possible, ideally 12 months prior to the day of general discussion. Children's views may also be collected through children's organizations, school associations and other child-led initiatives.

13. In addition, partner organizations are encouraged to establish an advisory group composed of children, for example in consultation with existing global networks, who have demonstrated an interest in children's rights, in advancing local efforts and priorities in the promotion and protection of children's rights, and in the proposed theme. Selection criteria for members of the advisory group should take into consideration diversity in age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, national origin, geographic location and socioeconomic background. It should aim for a broad and inclusive representation of children, if and wherever possible. Each member of the advisory group could represent a

group of peers in his or her country, and be supported by an organization[4] that provides assistance in fulfilling his or her role as a member in the advisory group. Whether through workshops at local level or through an advisory group, children should be regularly consulted in the preparation, implementation and follow-up to days of general discussion, and receive feedback on how their views were taken into account.

14. Prior to each day of general discussion, partner organizations should widely disseminate information on how children can participate in days of general discussion and provide appropriate channels for them to participate, especially remotely. In this regard, partner organizations could articulate and implement an outreach strategy, well in advance of the day of general discussion, to actively promote such discussions through various awareness-raising and social media campaigns that are accessible to, and interesting for, children. Such a strategy could also involve the organisation of consultations, including face-to-face workshops, debates and online surveys, to collect the views of children on the chosen theme, and consolidate the key messages from these consultations as an input for days of general discussion. During these consultations, partner organizations may encourage children to express their views in various forms including personal stories, photographs, artwork, music and videos.

15. Partner organizations should provide detailed guidance for adults on how to support children, in line with these working methods, in preparing submissions on themes for discussion or sharing views on potential side events or follow-up activities to days of general discussion. If possible, partner organizations should allocate financial resources for ensuring the participation of children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations, as well as children belonging to minority or indigenous groups, and develop in advance a child-friendly glossary of technical terms and acronyms to be shared with children.

16. For children who will attend the days of general discussion in person, partner organizations should provide practical guidance for accompanying adults and child facilitators of children on how to facilitate the participation of children, including information related to travel, health insurance, weather, accommodation, cost of living, registration, logistics, access, translation and any potential safety concerns.[5] In addition, partner organizations may consider organizing an orientation programme in Geneva for at least one day prior to the day of general discussion, to enable the children to become accustomed to the venue, meet members of the Committee and get to know each other. The orientation programme could, depending on time, include educational activities such as a preparatory training on the details of the day of general discussion, including the programme, confirmed participants and profiles of the panellists; opportunities for the children to brainstorm the issues together, prepare joint introductory statements, rehearse their presentations to each other and receive peer feedback; and a tour of the United Nations premises in Geneva, including the conference room in which the day of general discussion will take place. Social activities, including a tour of the city or other outings together and/or with members of the Committee, could also be organized for the children.

17. On the day of general discussion, partner organizations should ensure that children can also participate in the discussion remotely, such as by providing information on how to follow it online, live coverage on social media and opportunities for children to submit questions for panellists remotely. In order to create an environment that is respectful to children, all stakeholders participating in the day of general discussion should receive information about children's participation and considerations for upholding the Committee's requirements for such participation throughout the proceedings. Panellists, chairs and other speakers should be encouraged to use child-friendly language and approaches, and ensure that children's views are respected and reflected in the discussion. To the extent possible, children should be encouraged and supported to ask questions

[4] The supporting organization should have an adequate child protection policy, including frameworks for the safe involvement of children in international events, and maintain regular contact with the partner organization throughout the mandate of the child advisers.

[5] See, for example, the guidelines of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, *Together with Children – for Children: A Guide for Non-governmental Organizations Accompanying Children in CRC Reporting* (Geneva, 2011).

seeking clarification or understanding of technical terms and acronyms. Partner organizations are also encouraged to facilitate opportunities for them to meet with speakers and other persons of interest, either through private meetings or informal events, such as an evening reception or picnic.

18. After the day of general discussion, partner organizations are encouraged to provide child participants with information on the outcome report and opportunities to engage in initiatives, such as debates or other events, to follow-up on key outcomes. For children who participated in the days of general discussion in person, partner organizations are encouraged to organize a one-day debriefing in Geneva to take stock of lessons learned and plan follow-up initiatives. If possible, partner organizations should also gather views and experiences on how children are following up on days of general discussion in their respective contexts, and document them as lessons learned for future days of general discussion. Partner organizations should also evaluate their processes for ensuring child participation during days of general discussion and include the results of such evaluations in the outcome report.

# III. Methods of participation of children

19. Children are encouraged to participate in the following aspects related to days of general discussion: (a) identification of discussion themes; (b) design, planning and organization; (c) submissions, including through engagement in related consultations and debates; (d) participation in days of general discussion and related side events, either remotely or in person; (e) private meetings with members of the Committee; and (f) follow-up and evaluation.

## A. Identification of themes

20. Each day of general discussion focuses on a specific theme selected by the Committee and announced a year in advance of the event. The Committee welcomes proposals for themes in writing more than 16 months in advance of each day of general discussion, according to a standard template that requires information on the rationale for the proposed theme, its relevance to the Convention, scope, outcomes, objectives, format and possible speakers, as well as methods for financing and ensuring child participation. Children, through their respective child-led organizations or children's groups, are invited to prepare and submit proposals for consideration by the Committee. Children should also be encouraged to support organizations in the preparation of proposals, as proposals that clearly demonstrate child participation may be given favourable consideration by the Committee. Children should receive relevant information on how they can participate in the process. Following the final decision of the Committee on the selected theme, children and all others who submitted proposals or supported the preparation of a proposal are entitled to receive information on the process for selection.

## B. Design, planning and organization

21. Children are encouraged to participate in the design, planning and organization of days of general discussion, including through the following ways:

(a) **Concept and programme**. Children are encouraged to contribute to the development of the concept note, background document and programme of the days of general discussion, including the identification of speakers and working group topics. In particular, children could be consulted in the design and implementation of interactive activities to be incorporated into the programme, in order to make it more accessible and interesting for all participants, including children;

(b) **Preparations**. Children are encouraged to assist partner organizations on all planning and organizational issues related to days of general discussion, such as by participating in related workshops or applying to be a member of related advisory groups. Children can contribute to all stages of the planning and organization process, including in

the drafting of the workplan for the consultative workshops or terms of reference of the advisory group of children, as applicable, and in the organization of consultations in their respective countries to inform the development of relevant material for days of general discussion. Children should also be consulted in defining selection processes for children to attend face-to-face meetings, as relevant, and in the training of children who will participate in days of general discussion and accompanying adults;

(c) **Dissemination**. Children are encouraged to contribute to the development and dissemination of child-friendly versions of materials produced for days of general discussion, including child-friendly templates and guidelines. They should also assist in the mobilization of the participation of children in days of general discussion and in ensuring that such processes are inclusive, such as by disseminating relevant information and developing and implementing strategies for ensuring the participation of children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations, as well as children belonging to minority or indigenous groups;

(d) **Organization of side events and related activities**. Children are encouraged to share their views and recommendations to partner organizations on the design, planning and organization of possible side events and related activities, such as exhibitions, performances, evening receptions, speaking events and workshops. The Committee encourages organizers and co-sponsors of side events to consult with children and provide opportunities for them to organize them or to contribute in a meaningful way, bearing in mind that such events require preparations that start at least six to nine months prior to the day of general discussion.[6] In general, it is recommended that partner organizations consider incorporating any side events, in particular exhibitions, into the programme of the day of general discussion itself.

## C. Submissions

22. The Committee welcomes information from child-led organizations and children's groups, such as children's reports, studies, photographs, artwork, films and other audiovisual materials that reflect children's views and recommendations on the chosen theme of the day of general discussion. Submissions prepared by children, or reflecting children's views, should represent the interests and priorities of the children themselves. Adults should not use children's submissions as an opportunity to express their own views. The Committee also encourages the submission of written contributions on issues related to the thematic areas or focus of each working group. This information will serve as inputs to the general discussion, the outcome report and the series of recommendations adopted by the Committee for States parties. It will also enable the Committee to better understand the issues related to the implementation of the Convention.

23. Submissions can be prepared by children in any language, and supporting organizations should provide children with translations and ensure that submissions are received by the Committee in one of its working languages (English, French and Spanish). Written submissions should be limited to a maximum of seven pages (2,500 words). In their submissions, children should give their opinions on the issue and highlight the key concerns and problems that they are facing in their respective countries or communities with respect to those issues or rights. They should also share information on good practices in addressing those issues, highlight gaps and make recommendations for actions the Committee can take in relation to the themes under discussion. Submissions should include a maximum of five recommendations (no more than five lines each) that are directly relevant to the chosen theme and be attached to the submission as an annex.

24. Prior to the day of general discussion, children are also encouraged to participate in consultations organized by the partner organizations on the specific theme of the discussion, either through engagement in face-to-face workshops or submission of inputs through

[6] An exhibition must be sponsored by a Government, receive prior approval by the United Nations Office at Geneva and meet specific requirements regarding size and other specifications. Organizers must also secure a reservation of the space in which it will be exhibited well in advance.

online surveys. The results and key messages of the consultations will be compiled by the partner organizations and presented to the Committee as a submission for the day of general discussion. Governments, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, NGOs, national human rights institutions, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders are strongly encouraged to use these consultations to engage children and facilitate their participation in days of general discussion.

25. All children's submissions should be submitted to the secretariat of the Committee no later than six weeks prior to the day of general discussion. Children's submissions should detail the process by which children were selected to participate meaningfully in days of general discussion, in line with the Committee's basic requirements on the right of the child to be heard, as well as the methods used to collect, interpret and articulate the children's views.[7] As submissions are circulated to registered participants and posted on the Committee's website, submissions prepared by children should include written consent from the children and their parents or guardians, as applicable, to make them public; without such consent, the information is presumed to be confidential. The Committee reserves the right to refuse the publication of content that it considers inaccurate or containing language likely to cause harm and, in such cases, will inform the child(ren) of the reasons for refusing the publication of the submission(s).

## D. Participation in the days of general discussion and related side events

26. The Committee holds days of general discussion, on a biennial basis, during a regular session of the Committee, usually from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, and with side events occurring outside of these hours. While the format of days of general discussion may vary depending on the theme and programme, to which children may contribute, it usually begins with a short plenary session, which includes opening remarks from members of the Committee and representatives of various United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and children. In order to facilitate the exchange of views, participants are then usually divided into two or more working groups to exchange views on specific areas of focus related to the chosen theme. Finally, the day of general discussion ends with a closing plenary session, during which each working group reports back to the plenary and a member of the Committee makes closing remarks.[8]

27. Children have the opportunity to observe and participate in days of general discussion, either remotely or in person, in the following capacities:

(a) **Remote participants**. All children are encouraged to participate remotely by:

(i) Following the discussion online through the media, including social media, and the live webcast when provided by the United Nations.[9] The social media coverage provided by partner organizations, which should be actively promoted well in advance of the day of general discussion, could include live updates and video feeds throughout the day of general discussion as well as opportunities for children to engage in the discussion, such as by participating in a virtual discussion with other online viewers, voting in a live poll on the topic or interacting on social media with a well-known figure who is attending in person;

(ii) Asking questions and giving inputs on the chosen themes. Partner organizations should ensure that children who are participating online have the opportunity to contribute to the day of general discussion, and moderate their remote participation;

[7] For child-friendly guidelines on preparing submissions, refer to Child Rights Connect, Day of general discussion". Available at www.childrightsconnect.org/connect-with-the-un-2/committee-on-the-rights-of-the-child/days-of-general-discussion.

[8] For more information on days of general discussion, including the programme and registration procedures, see www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/DiscussionDays.aspx.

[9] Live programming and recordings of days of general discussion are available at webtv.un.org.

(iii) Submitting a short video message of no more than three minutes in duration expressing their views on the theme, to be shown during the day of general discussion;

(iv) Participating in related debates organized by national actors in parallel to days of general discussion.

(b) **In-person participants**. Children may attend in person and participate by:

(i) Making brief oral contributions during the working group meetings, in which they can give their opinion on the chosen theme, highlight the key concerns and problems that children are facing in their country and share their views on recommendations for States;

(ii) Co-chairing working group meetings or presenting the conclusions of the working groups to the plenary as rapporteurs, at the request of the chairs of the working groups;

(iii) Participating in, and submitting related materials for, related side events, exhibitions, film viewings or discussions, as well as in pre- and post-event workshops.

(c) **Panellists or speakers**. Children may be invited to speak as a panellist or speaker.

28. For children who wish to participate in the day of general discussion in person, supporting organizations and other relevant stakeholders should support them in completing the registration form and submitting it to the secretariat of the Committee prior to the deadline for submission.[10] As this is a public meeting of the Committee, there is no registration fee. The secretariat of the Committee will provide a confirmation of registration; only those who have received a confirmation of registration will be permitted to participate in days of general discussion, and will be requested to present their passports, or other form of identification recognized by the United Nations, in person to security officials in order to obtain an identification badge to enter the Palais des Nations. All children under the age of 18 years must be accompanied by an adult, and both the child and the accompanying adult must receive confirmation of registration and present their passports in person in order to collect their identification badges. The United Nations is not able to provide assistance with visa, travel or accommodation arrangements. Participants and/or their supporting organizations are responsible for all expenses and arrangements related to their participation in the day of general discussion.

29. While the Committee welcomes the participation of all children who express an interest, due to limited space the Committee reserves the right to limit the number of child representatives for each organization or body who are permitted to participate in days of general discussion. In cases in which the number of registration requests exceeds the amount of space available, priority will be given to members of children's advisory groups and children who have provided submissions to the Committee. Children should represent, as far as possible, different groups and concerns of their respective countries or communities, and special efforts should be made to ensure participation of children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations.

30. The Committee counts on the national stakeholders facilitating child participation to ensure that accompanying adults and child facilitators of children respect the basic requirements of the Committee for the implementation of the right of the child to be heard, and support children in a manner that is respectful and appropriate to the children's age and maturity. The secretariat of the Committee, in collaboration with partner organizations, will take all measures possible to facilitate the attendance of children, in particular in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations, and will provide technical assistance to children

[10] For larger school groups, at least one accompanying adult is required for every 10 children between the ages of 5 and10 years, and one adult for every 15 children between the ages of 10 and 16 years. Larger school groups with children 17 years and older require at least one accompanying adult or guardian for the whole group. For larger school groups with children below the age of 11 years, the accompanying adult(s) may collect identification badges for the whole group.

who participate, if requested. The United Nations provides simultaneous interpretation for the working languages of the Committee (English, French and Spanish); participants who require interpretation for other languages are requested to attend the day of general discussion with their own interpreters, and seek support from the secretariat in granting the interpreters access to the appropriate facilities. Furthermore, the United Nations is committed to making its facilities and meetings accessible to, and inclusive of, children with disabilities. Children with disabilities must provide the secretariat with information in advance regarding their accessibility requirements and the conference rooms they will be visiting, so that they can receive the necessary information regarding accessible doors, ramps and toilets. Specific questions and requests regarding accessibility should be sent to the secretariat.[11]

## E. Private meetings with members of the Committee

31. Children who receive confirmation of their in-person participation in the day of general discussion are invited to meet with members of the Committee in an informal, private setting to discuss issues related to the discussion, in particular those that are particularly sensitive or confidential. The meeting usually takes place on the day prior to the day of general discussion, lasts up to one hour and has a more child-friendly format than standard meetings of the Committee. It is exclusively for children who are under the age of 18 at the time of the meeting, and the Committee reserves the right to limit the number of adults present in the meeting. In general, accompanying adults are only permitted to participate in the meeting if their presence is required for interpretation or if specifically requested by the children to do so.

32. The Committee counts on the supporting Governments, organizations and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the children and adults in their delegations are informed about, and respect, the confidentiality and privacy of the children who participate in these meetings. The United Nations does not provide interpretation for these meetings, as they are scheduled outside the official meeting time of the Committee. Accompanying adults should ensure interpretation for children who do not speak one of the working languages of the Committee (English, French or Spanish).

## F. Follow-up and evaluation

33. The Committee collects views from children on how their participation was supported during the day of general discussion, including whether they felt that their participation was valued and their views were respected, and welcomes recommendations from children on how to ensure child participation in its future work. After each day of general discussion, children who have participated will be to complete an evaluation form provided by the secretariat of the Committee. Similar efforts should be made by relevant stakeholders to evaluate the processes for ensuring child participation and document lessons learned for future application. Children should also be supported to organize, and take part in, follow-up initiatives to days of general discussion.

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[11] More information on the accessibility features of the Palais des Nations is available at www.unog.ch/80256EE60057E2B7/(httpPages)/E94243FCCEB3006C125815B0042BB1C?OpenDocument.